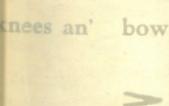


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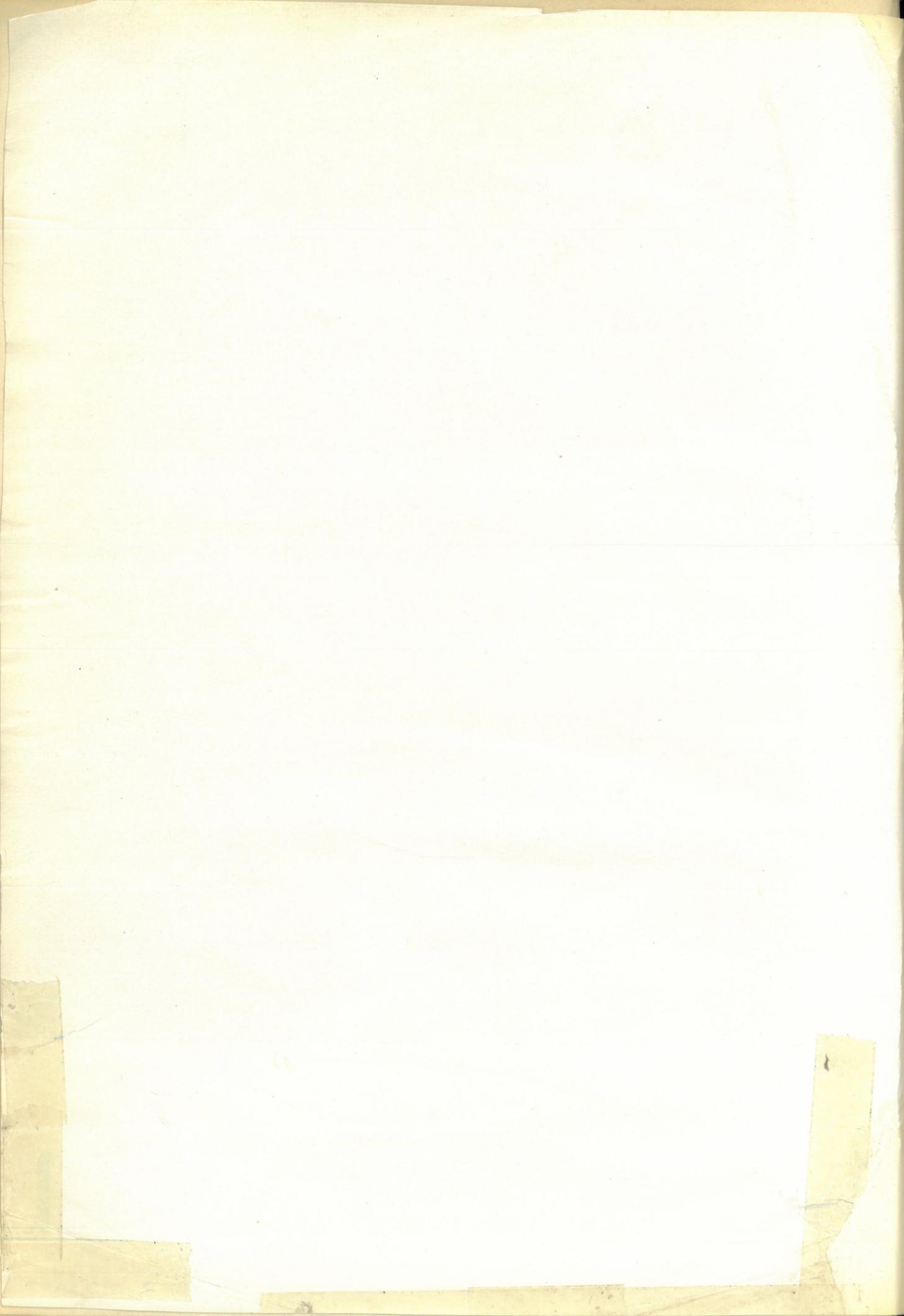
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# Days with Paul Robeson

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# Days with Paul Robeson

In October 1960, Paul Robeson visited the German Democratic Republic on the invitation of the President of the German Peace Council and the Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences, Berlin, Professor Walter Friedrich

# Greetings to Paul Robeson

by

Lori Ludwig

You fight singing, Paul Robeson.  
The power of your songs  
strengthens your coloured brothers.  
Morning burns red.  
To many, you gave back  
their courage and confidence.  
Justice was dead  
for the oppressed;  
but you knew a country,  
where dreams and life  
were as closely linked  
as mother and child.  
Your wisdom  
resounds as a message.  
The lords and masters sensed,  
another wind was blowing.

They barred the concert halls,  
persisted in tormenting you.  
They wanted to frighten, to subject you –  
what foolish delusion!  
You took your songs to the streets  
and squares.  
The joy of the crowd  
swept around you.

*Reaction*  
hated you now more bitterly than ever.  
It cancelled your contracts,  
withdrew your records.  
Your native country  
you were not allowed to leave.  
To be silenced  
and forgotten.

Yet your voice escaped,  
hidden on ships;  
friends smuggled out  
tape recordings.  
The miners in Wales  
listened to your voice  
coming over the cable –  
into their halls.  
From Canada  
came the workers  
with their wives and children  
to the frontier,  
filled with hope.  
They spoke to you,  
looked you in your face.  
Your songs, your encouragement,  
how the poor had missed them!

The lords and masters –  
in the icy current of war –  
sat a committee of inquisitors  
upon you.  
Head upraised,  
certain of victory,  
with telling blows  
you smote the enemy.  
You broke the chains,  
victorious.  
The struggle,  
echoing round the world  
defeated the ban.  
Great was the joy,  
again to welcome you.  
Singer of freedom!  
Fighter against misery!



*Welcome to Berlin!  
Arrival at the airport  
of the Deutsche Lufthansa  
in Berlin-Schönefeld*



*First meeting with friends*

# "Big Paul"

— that is what the people in the working-class districts of America call Paul Robeson. Always a welcome guest, they travel hundreds of miles simply to hear him sing and to have the chance to talk to him.

For many years, however, he was virtually a prisoner in America. The U.S. government refused him his passport. But it was a mistake to imagine, that Paul Robeson's voice could be silenced by such methods. A world-wide protest movement arose in defence of his rights to travel and pursue his artistic career.

In January 1956, three people in Manchester decided to put on a concert, with the aim of paying tribute to Robeson's art and calling attention to his persecution by American reaction. Although lacking financial resources, they booked the famous Free Trade Hall in Manchester with a seating capacity of five hundred, for the eleventh of March. Paul Robeson himself wrote regretting that he could not appear personally but sent a tape-recording to be played at the concert. Although their friends smiled dubiously at their efforts and the fascists sent threatening letters the three sponsors continued canvassing for support. Then the unexpected happened. Despite the sceptics and the threats, half an hour before the beginn-

ing of the concert the hall was packed to capacity. As the lights dimmed an expectant hush fell upon the audience. The curtain rose and a huge portrait of Paul Robeson was thrown on the specially erected screen. For the first time for many years, his deep, rich voice rang out once more through the Free Trade Hall. Spellbound, the audience listened as he said: "Though I must send you these words from far, I can say that never have I felt closer to you than I do today. The warmth of your friendship reaches out across the barriers which temporarily separate us and rekindles the memories of many happy years that I spent among you. I recall how a Manchester friend explained to me how closely together we two were bound by the web of history and human suffering and aspiration. He told me of the life of bitter hardship and toil which his father and grandfather knew in the mills, and of how the cotton which his fore-fathers wove linked them with other toilers whose sweat and toil produced that cotton in far away America, the Negro slaves, my own father, my own people.

... I myself believe, that the pressure of democratic opinion, here and abroad, will compel the State Department to relent in their refusal to permit me to travel to other countries ... I am eager to be on my way. To be free to sing, to act, to be at your side and at the side of people everywhere, whose hearts sing peace and freedom, brotherhood and love!" This is how the cold war barriers were broken and Paul Robeson's voice was heard for the first time after many years outside America.

"Let Paul Robeson sing", this slogan of the movement soon became a byword, not only in Manchester, but throughout Britain and in other parts of the world.

The organizers themselves were amazed at the flood of support from every section of the British public. The rank and file of the labour movement sent sixpences and shillings and the Welsh Miners' Union donated fifty pounds.

"Let Paul Robeson sing" became the demand of people throughout the land, from the shipyards of Scotland to the London docks, from the Yorkshire mines to the Welsh valleys.

In December 1956, a conference for the foundation of the National Paul Robeson Committee was called in Manchester. In a matter of a few months, the movement for Paul Robeson had grown from a mere handful to a million strong. Among the supporters were such well-known personalities as Mr. Aneurin Bevan, the Bishop of Birmingham, the Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, the chairman of the Labour Party, Mr. Tom Driberg, the composer Benjamin Britten, the conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, the Catholic priest, Trevor Huddleston, the painter Paul Hogarth and many others. Artists, scientists and many members of Parliament upheld, together with

**Britain says: Let Robeson sing**

**PAUL ROBESON VISIT  
EQUITY MOTIONS**

PAUL ROBESON urges in two meetings of the eighteen members of the Council to move at the annual general meeting in April 28 at 10 a.m. One moved by Roger Snowden and another by members reads: "That this annual general meeting of the British Actors' Association deplore the continued refusal of the Council to make arrangements for the pay increase of its members, and to increase the pay of rehearsal fees, and to give the actors a reasonable amount of time to find work in the intervals between the meetings of the Council."

MR. ROBESO  
FILLS THE  
STAGE  
The actors of Britain de  
LET ROBESO  
SING HERE  
buff for American ba

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

"Can you hear me, Paul?"

American Telephone and Telegraph, in New York, and the General Post Office, in London, last night between them helped Paul Robeson to make the United States Department of State look rather silly. In 1950 Mr. Robeson's passport was taken away and he has been kept in ever since. Last night some of his words and music escaped alive, through the new high-fidelity transatlantic telephone cable. The ageing but unwearying bass talked and sang in a commercial recording studio in New York, while about nine hundred of his admirers sat and listened to loud-speakers, beside the almost empty stage in St. Pancras Town Hall. A giant photograph of Mr. Robeson smiled down on us from the wall. The compere was Mr. Alan Bass, the compere.

"Paul," Mr. Bass said, "you're not Paul." Mr. Bass, the 30-year-old colour singer, last night beat the seven-year-old American ban on giving concerts anywhere outside his country.

Robeson return

PAUL ROBESON, the 59-year-old colour singer, last night beat the seven-year-old American ban on giving concerts anywhere outside his country.

26 MPs say: let Robeson travel

Mechanical difficulty

After Mr. Bass had tried twice more in vain to converse, a young bearded man in the audience exclaimed triumphantly, "Hah! You see! The F.B.I. won't let him talk!" A.G.P.O. technician later explained backstage that the initial difficulty was merely mechanical. New York apparently had not turned up the volume of Mr. Robeson's loud-speaker though eventually, evidently, they did: and he was able to thank London's F.B.I. without difficulty, and promise that he somehow

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

It is indeed good news that Miss Flora Robeson's letter of protest to the Government, on foot, before the actors' Association, has been answered. A great gentleman, Mr. Paul Robeson, has written to the actors' Association, asking them to review the case of his son, and above all, to intercede for an American hero near who is Shakespeare.

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A great

Mr. Roger Snowden

## They fight for his right to sing

MANCHESTER, England  
THE Let Paul Robeson Sing Committee of this city announced that Robeson would speak and sing via tape-recording to a mass meeting in Free Trade Hall on Sun., March 11. A distinguished group of speakers joining in the campaign to secure a passport for Robeson was to include Manchester MP's Will Griffiths and Konni Ziliacus, Liberal barrister Vaughan Davies, former British middle-weight boxing champion Len Johnson, secy. H. Newbold of the Manchester & Salford Trades Council, GUARDIAN editor-in-exile Cedric Belfrage, and R. A. Cassasola, Foundry Workers Union president and

member of the Labour Party natl. executive.

The musical program, in addition to ten minutes of specially-recorded songs by Robeson, was to include a chorus of South Wales miners.

A long list of citizens associating themselves with the committee "in a personal capacity" included MP's Sydney Silverman, C. Royle and Emrys Hughes, cartoonist Vicky of the London Daily Mirror, London Philharmonic Orchestra conductor Sir Adrian Boult, Prof. Gluckman of Manchester University, pres. Whittaker and secy. Hobson of the Musicians Union in Manchester, and dist. secys. Hatton and Scanlon of the Electrical Trades & Engineering unions.

*Manchester, England was one of the main centres of the movement fighting for Paul Robeson's rights as an artist*

large sections of the labour movement, Paul Robeson's right to sing.

The conference closed with a film show at the Free Trade Hall. Chosen for this occasion was the film "Proud Valley". It tells the story of the struggle of the Welsh miners in the Thirties against unemployment and the threat of war. Paul Robeson is one of them and the last scene shows him singing among a group of miners. As the last notes of his song die away, the lights in the hall are turned up and on the stage of the Free Trade Hall stand a choir of Welsh miners, the sons of the men who years ago had taken part in the film with Paul Robeson. They had sacrificed three days' wages to come down to Manchester and sing for Paul Robeson at this

conference. A few months later, thousands of Londoners experienced an interesting concert in St. Pancras Town Hall that is no doubt unique in history. Through the new transatlantic telephone cable, Paul Robeson sang and spoke directly to his audience in the British capital.

This was the final proof that the voice of Paul Robeson could not be silenced. From then on, his voice could be heard more and more often. On tape and gramophone recordings, at mass meetings, in theatres or concert halls it roused and inspired millions throughout the world. Perhaps no other singer before him has ever moved such a vast audience as this great American Negro - this champion of peace.

**B**y this time, a broad movement for the freedom of Paul Robeson had also developed in the German Democratic Republic. It found its climax in April 1958 at a concert in the Friedrichstadt-Palast in Berlin, where leading German artists, together with thousands of Berliners, protested against the travel restrictions which Paul Robeson was subjected to.

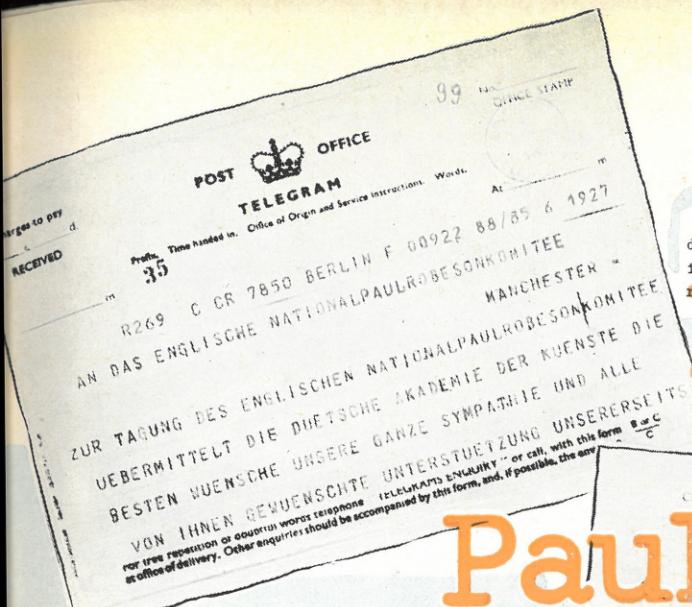
Meanwhile the "Let Paul Robeson sing" movement continued to grow throughout the world. The sixtieth birthday of the Negro singer became a great international event. In nearly thirty countries, committees had been formed to celebrate this occasion and demand the abolition of all restrictions placed upon this artist.

Many prominent personalities took part in the meetings organised by these committees.

The Indian Prime Minister Mr. Nehru said: "This day should be celebrated, not only because Mr. Robeson is one of the greatest artists of our generation, but also because he fights and suffers for a cause which should be dear to all of us: for human dignity. To celebrate his birthday means to honour both a great man and at the same time the cause for which he stands and for which he suffers."



*Celebration in the Berlin Friedrichstadt-Palast in honour of Paul Robeson's 60th birthday on the 9th of April 1958*



VERBAND DEUTSCHER KOMPONISTEN  
UND MUSIKWISSENSCHAFTLER

VDK

Auch wir verurteilen jene Kräfte in Amerika,  
die den freiheitlichen Volkssänger bei der Ausübung seines Berufes  
im eigenen Lande behindern und die ihm eine Genehmigung zu Konzert-  
reisen ein anderes Land verweigern.

National

mit den besten Grüßen  
W. V. NOTOWICZ  
(Prof. N. Notowicz)  
Generalsekretär

Paul Robeson

HANS-OTTO-THEATER UND TOURNEE-ENSEMBLES  
INTENDANT ILSE WEINTRAUD

Mit wem ich auch spreche, jeder liebt und verehrt diesen Menschen, der mit Recht als einer der grössten Volkssänger unserer Epoche gilt. Ich selber habe seit mehr als zwanzig Jahren immer wieder Gelegenheit genommen, der Stimme Robesons zu lauschen und mir aus ihr einen Teil der Kraft genommen, die wir Künstler brauchen, um unser schönes Am ausfüllen zu können.

Weintraud  
Intendant.

Aubrey Pawley  
c/o Deutscher Konsulat  
Direktion der Deutschen  
Krausenstrasse 10  
Berlin W. 8. D.  
23 November

Charges to pay  
TELEGRAM  
From  
By  
To  
Bv  
BESORGNISS UND EMPÖERUNG ERGRIFF ALLE SEINE FREUNDE  
ALS UNS ERST VOR KURZEM DIE NACHRICHT UEBER DEN  
ANSCHLAG AUF DIE GESUNDE KUNST IN BERLIN  
DE EN IN DER GEZEIGTE S E E I T  
PROTESTBEWEGUNG, DIE AUCH UNSERER UNTERSTÜTZUNG  
GEWISS SEIN KANN, ZUM BALDIGEN ERFOLG. UEHREN  
PROFESSOR HANS PISCHNER STELLVERTRETER DES MINISTERS  
FUER KULTUR DER DEUTSCHEN DEMOKRATISCHEN REPUBLIK ++

General Secretary

Paul Robeson, the leader of the Negro people - my people - has  
always pointed the way for us to go toward equality - my people - has  
and he has not only fought for his own people but for all underprivileged  
people throughout the world. He has never been afraid of fighting - has never  
been discouraged; and never will he be. He is a fighter - has never  
been afraid of his personal safety or his personal life. He is a fighter who  
stands for. The recent fascism attack on his person only expresses his  
sincerity.

AUBREY PAWLEY

CLUB DER FILMSCHAFFENDEN  
BERLIN

Genehmigen Sie bitte unsere solidarischen Wünsche und Grüße  
und seien Sie versichert, daß die Filmschaffenden der  
Deutschen Demokratischen Republik mit großer Anteilnahme  
Ihre Bemühungen unterstützen.

Club der Filmschaffenden  
A. Klemke  
1. Sekretär

LANDESTHEATER  
Halle

Tausende und Abertausende warten darauf, diesen hervorragenden  
Mann und großen Künstler auf den Bühnen unserer Theater- und  
Konzerthäuser zu sehen und zu hören. Sie haben ein Recht auf  
ihn, Paul Robeson ist dazu bereit und niemand darf ihn daran  
hindern.

Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung  
F. D. Diez  
Generalintendant

VOLKSBUHNE  
DEB INTENDANT

Seien Sie versichert, daß Sie bei einer Aufführung die  
Sympathie und die Unterstützung aller Künstler haben  
rechnen, Paul Robeson in ihrem Hause zu hören.

8 Cliff Crescent  
Salford 7

DEUTSCHE HOCHSCHULE FÜR MUSIK  
BERLIN  
Der Dozent

Nehmen Sie bitte zur Kenntnis, daß die Professoren, Dozenten  
und Studenten unserer Hochschule Paul Robeson mit großer Be-  
geisterung begrüßen würden, wie er überhaupt in Ost-Berlin  
ein großes, begeistertes Publikum hätte. Wir fordern die Be-  
hördnen der USA auf, dem berühmten Sänger die Ausreise zu ge-  
statten, was wohl eine nur zu selbstverständliche Forderung  
sein sollte.

G. Knepler  
(Professor Dr. G. Knepler)

Lancs.

Paul Robeson is the great-grandson of a hero of the American independence movement. His father, William Robeson, was born as a slave on one of the plantations in the American South. As a young man, he fled to the North to get himself an education and so became a clergyman in a small Negro church. To his parishioners and to his sons he taught that the Negro should have the same rights as the white man. His teachings must have had a decisive influence in the moulding of the character of his youngest son, Paul Robeson.

Already as a child, Paul surprised his family by his extraordinary and manifold abilities. He was one of the first Negro students who obtained a state scholarship which he fully justified by becoming a Phi Beta Kappa. But not only in his academic work did he prove to be highly successful. He became one of the best known football players in the U. S. and even won laurels in the ring. Tempting offers for a professional career were made to him. But Robeson's real interest was on the stage. Already, while studying at Rutgers University, he belonged to an amateur theatrical group, where he



*Paul Robeson and his wife Eslanda (centre) with their children Marilyn and Pauly and their grandchildren*

developed his flare for Negro folk songs. Soon his songs and the special interpretation which he gave to them became well known.

Robeson's actual career as an actor began with his role of "Emperor Jones" and reached its height when he played the title role in Shakespeare's "Othello". His memorable performance was repeated again in 1959, when he played this role once more at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon.

Today Robeson is recognised as one of the leading Shakespeare interpreters of our time. Yet however great his success as an actor was, he never for a moment forgot the struggle of his people, the American Negroes, for their freedom. Thus he writes in his book "Here I Stand": "When, during the war, I had the opportunity to play the leading role in

a Shakespearean play before an American audience (fifteen years after my first appearance in a Shakespearean performance in London), I was deeply satisfied in the knowledge, that I, as Dr. Benjamin Mays put it, had rendered a great service to the Negro race and to the whole world."

Indeed, Robeson had reason to be satisfied, for his performance of "Othello" showed that Negroes could give great and enduring interpretations in the world of theatre. This stood in sharp contrast to the prevailing practice in Hollywood and Broadway which compelled Negroes as a rule to accept worthless roles.



*Scenes from "Othello"  
at the Shakespeare Memorial  
Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon*



# R

obeson's outstanding talent as a singer and his upright artistic personality have made him one of the greatest singers of all time. It is largely to his credit that a great many revolutionary songs, workers' and Negro songs – the music of the common people – have been preserved for posterity. It is due to him that really militant Negro music has become known and loved throughout the world. His art, deeply rooted

in the life of the people, draws its persuasive power from their struggles and expresses all that is lasting in the culture which the gifted, joyous, music-loving, yet nevertheless unhappy Negro people have created over the centuries.

Robeson has always been the implacable enemy of colonialism. In London he met African students and the leaders of the growing

African and Asian national movements. They helped him to understand better and more deeply the aspirations of the Negro people and to link him even more closely with the home of his forefathers, with the African people.

During the Spanish Civil War, Robeson went to Spain to fight against fascism. The deeper Robeson was drawn into the struggle against

colonialism and for the rights of the Negro people, the more he turned his eyes to the Soviet Union. He was eager to learn something about this country and decided on a concert tour in the Soviet Union. On his return to the Western world in 1934, he declared that in the Soviet Union he had for the first time in his life experienced the feeling of genuine human dignity.

In the late thirties Robeson returned to America. It was then that he made Earl Robinson's "Ballad for Americans" so famous throughout the United States that it became the battle song of the "other America".

During the war, Paul Robeson went to Germany to sing to the American troops. Everywhere, he stressed the necessity of utterly defeating fascism. Immediately after the war, he became one of the most ardent advocates of the cause of peace, and used all his strength in the building of American-Soviet friendship. Even during the most difficult period of the McCarthy witchhunt and the vicious attacks of the Un-American Activities Committee, Robeson remained true to his convictions.



In April 1949, Robeson went to Paris to attend the World Peace Conference. There he said: "It is unthinkable that American Negroes could go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed us for generations against the Soviet Union which in one generation has raised our people to full human dignity."

The cold war strategists used Robeson's outspoken efforts for American-Soviet friendship as a pretext to confiscate his passport and silence his voice.

Throughout the years of his difficult struggle Paul Robeson had the constant support of his equally courageous wife, Eslanda Goode Robeson. He once said: "Without my wife I would never have achieved what I did."



*Eslanda Robeson at the demonstration, commemorating victims of fascism, Berlin September 1959*



*During a singing tour of the Soviet Union in September 1958, Paul Robeson received the diploma of honorary professor of the „Peter Tschaikowski“ Moscow State Conservatory from Professor Sveshnikov*

For almost 10 years Robeson was refused a passport and was virtually held as a prisoner in the U. S. But in June 1958, the State Department quietly returned his passport to him. Paul Robeson's courageous stand as well as world-wide pressure of democratic opinion to "let Paul Robeson sing" had had its telling effects. Paul Robeson was free! Free to resume his artistic career and to bring pleasure and inspiration to millions of people

throughout the world. Indeed a great victory for the arts and international friendship had been won.

A triumphant concert tour through Britain and the Soviet Union followed. On the 13th of September 1958 Paul Robeson was presented with the diploma of honorary professor at the Moscow State Conservatory. It was a fitting climax to a tour in which he recaptured the hearts of the whole of the Soviet people.



And now he has been a guest in the German Democratic Republic, whose people ardently share Paul Robeson's desire for peace and international friendship in the world.

It was therefore very much more than a mere symbol that one of the first honours that he received in the G. D. R. was the German Peace Medal, the highest award of the German peace movement. Professor Walter Friedrich, Vice President of the World Peace Council and President of the German Peace Council, said on the occasion of the award:

*"My dear friend Paul Robeson. We look upon you as a great singer of the people, a fighter for the people whose voice renders*

*strength and courage even to those who are faint of heart. Your voice is known and revered in all parts of our Republic as well as in West Germany. Our people understand very well that this voice belongs to a man who has staked his whole life on a cause which is very dear to us. Everything we are doing here is ultimately aimed at building a world without arms and without war, it is aimed at Germany becoming a land of peace and occupying a respected place in the great community of nations."*





*Professor Albert Norden, member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, pays tribute to Paul Robeson*

In his speech Professor Albert Norden stressed Paul Robeson's life of struggle and his merits for the preservation of peace.

*"It is said, dear Paul Robeson, that one of your forefathers, a baker, handed bread to the hungry, freezing and ill-clad soldiers of George Washington during their revolt against the yoke of English colonialism. You, Paul Robeson, as a fighter, an artist and a scholar, give all people, including us Germans, the spiritual food in our struggle for freedom, equality and fraternity of all peoples and races. You and we are privileged to witness and help in that epoch-making movement of liberation of the African people, who are now entering the great community of the United Nations.*

*The West German state, through its President, Lübke, recently praised vociferously the brutal racial policy of the Union of South Africa. In the same vein were the honours which were bestowed on General von Lettow-Vorbeck on his ninetieth birthday by the*

*Bonn government, the same man, who had slaughtered 55 years ago, the Hereros and Hottentots in South-West Africa.*

*We in the G. D. R., however, feel a deep sympathy with all people, no matter what colour skin they have, who struggle for their national liberation and independence and we honour therefore the man who keeps on hammering at the chains that still bind 20 million Negroes in the United States and millions of others in Africa."*

Deeply moved, Paul Robeson expressed his thanks for the high award. He pointed out that during the years when he was not permitted to leave the U. S., the letters and messages from the German Democratic Republic had strengthened and encouraged him.

*"...I felt especially close to you when, during a visit to Moscow, I received a copy of the film 'Bridge Across the Ocean', which friends in the G. D. R. had produced at the time when I was fighting for my passport."*



*Paul Robeson receives his honorary doctorate*

On the same day Paul Robeson received the honorary degree of doctor of philosophy from the Dean of the Philosophy Faculty of the Humboldt-University, Professor Lehnert, in the hall of the senate. In his speech Prof. Lehnert stated that the university honoured this great American artist especially

for the unique way in which he had developed his art as an instrument in the fight for peace and for the progress of mankind. Paul Robeson thanked, very warmly, the rector of the university, Professor Kurt Schröder, as well as the whole teaching staff, for the high honour bestowed on him.

*Students throng the entrance to the Humboldt University to see Paul Robeson*



*The Chancellor of the  
Humboldt University,  
Berlin,  
Prof. Schröder,  
Dr. Paul Robeson and  
Professor Lehnert,  
Dean of the Philosophy  
Faculty*



*"My deepest thanks to you all. My thanks to the teachers of this great university, whose privilege it is to shape the future of many of these fine students, and my thanks to the students themselves. I want to thank you for your help over the years of tremendous struggle and persecution. Danke sehr! Again as I said, I came as a sort of student, like you all. I think I am what you would call an eternal student. And here I leave you as a doctor."*





*Everywhere, Paul Robeson received a tremendous welcome*

After the ceremony, when the rector and senate accompanied the newly-created Doctor Paul Robeson to an open-air meeting in the university fore-court, thousands of students cheered and waved enthusiastically. Standing in the brilliant sunshine, he spoke and sang to the students. In his address he said: "*All over the world the youth stand in the forefront of the fight for peace. That is good, and indeed, that is how it should be. In my country too the youth have become a symbol of the fight for peace and a better life.*"

Finally everyone joined in singing John Brown's Body, the famous American song of the fight for Negro freedom, with Paul Robeson's powerful deep voice leading them.

In the evening the young people of Berlin awaited Paul Robeson as their guest at a big concert arranged by the Central Council of the Free German Youth Organisation. The whole evening had a specially festive atmosphere and this was enhanced by the presence of Walter Ulbricht and Otto Grotewohl, leading members of the government and leading personalities from cultural and sci-



Stormy ovations for Paul Robeson in the Central Youth Club of Berlin

tific life. The hall, packed to capacity with 5,000 young people from every walk of life awaited eagerly for the appearance of the giant figure of Paul Robeson. This evening really belonged to the young people. It was they who put on the programme, and all of them, from the smallest pioneer to the experienced soloists of the National Youth Ensemble, gave of their best. A highlight of the evening was the performance of calypsos, folk songs and dances by a group of African students, but when Paul Robeson sprang up from his seat and joined in their dance, the

audience nearly lifted the roof. As the students embraced Robeson there were tears of joy in their eyes. Then at last, the great moment came when Paul Robeson himself mounted the stage to perform for the young people. Eagerly they drank in his words.

*"This has been without question, and that you will certainly understand, one of the most moving days of my 62 year-old life. I want to thank you here in the German Democratic Republic for your warm welcome to me, not only to me but to the people from whom I spring, from the Negro people of*

*America, from Africa the land of my forebears, and from all of progressive America of all colours. We stretch out the hand of friendship to you here in Germany and to all people all over the world.*

*The cause of peace is a very sacred cause in the world today, and one must devote oneself to it, whether it be in the sciences or in the arts, to this struggle of humankind. I am so proud tonight to see my brothers from Africa, from all parts of Africa. Thank you here again in the G.D.R. for giving them the opportunity to study and go back and build their land.*

*Certainly I know my people must understand that we in Africa, we in Asia, we in the Southern States of America, my brothers*

*and sisters in Cuba and in Latin America, wherever they may be, are able to struggle for their freedom precisely because of the power of the Soviet Union and China and the other lands of socialism here on earth."*

During his recital Helene Weigel presented him with a beautiful silk cloth, bearing a reproduction of the famous Picasso dove, symbol of the Berliner Ensemble, as a present from the famous theatre company, and read the famous appeal by Brecht to the Peace Congress in Vienna.

The climax of the evening came when Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the G.D.R., presented Paul Robeson with the Order of the Star of International Friendship. Walter Ulbricht said:

*"Dear Paul Robeson, . . . Here, before the youth of the new Germany, you sang one of the most wonderful songs of our great national poet, Schiller, 'The Ode to Joy'. All men shall be brothers, set to the beautiful music of Beethoven. Your wonderful voice, which fills the hearts of all suppressed peoples, gives strength to peace fighters throughout the world in the struggle for international friendship and peace.*

*In honouring you, dear Paul Robeson, we reaffirm our solidarity with those who suffered under colonial oppression in the past and those who are still compelled to live in colonial bondage today. Like you, we shall not rest until freedom and human dignity are guaranteed to all peoples. You have fought undauntedly for peace. Nobody has been able to prevent you from speaking out for friendship and understanding among the peoples. Wherever freedom, justice and human dignity are at stake, you*





*have raised your voice, used your art as a weapon for the victory of peace and progress. The people of the German Democratic Republic are overjoyed to welcome such a great man to their country. In appreciation of your outstanding services towards the understanding and friendship between all peoples and for the preservation of peace, I confer upon you, in the name of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic, the order 'Star of International Friendship'."*

As Walter Ulbricht pinned the order on Paul Robeson's breast (he is the first person to be awarded the order) the audience rose to its feet and a mighty storm of applause broke out.

The orchestra struck up the opening bars of the song "One Great Vision Unites Us" – the song of the whole world's youth, and every single person in the hall joined hands and sang it.



Dancing with African students from the Karl Marx University, Leipzig  
at the Central Youth Club, Berlin

The chairman of the Council of State of the G.D.R., Walter Ulbricht,  
congratulating Paul Robeson on the awarding of the Order, Star of Peoples  
Friendship'



*It is important to understand that in dealing with us, the Negro people of America today; we are very proud of what's happening in Africa and know that we have foreign friends and powerful friends in the lands of socialism; we are proud people too, ready to struggle for our freedom.*

PAUL ROBESON on occasion of the reception of the German Academy of Arts

One of the most impressive occasions during the visit was the ceremony at which Paul Robeson was made an honorary member of the German Academy of Arts. Professor

Otto Nagel, the famous German painter and President of the Academy, in bestowing the honour on Paul Robeson, said: "*Prompted by the desire to have closer relations with outstanding artists at home and abroad and thereby to serve the interests of life as well as art, the members of the German Academy of Arts have elected the singer Paul Robeson a corresponding member at their plenary session of October 26, 1956, in appreciation of his great work.*"

Dr. Johannes Dieckmann, Vice-Chairman of the State Council and President of the People's Chamber, Prof.



*The President of the German Academy of Arts, Berlin, Professor Otto Nagel, awards the diploma*



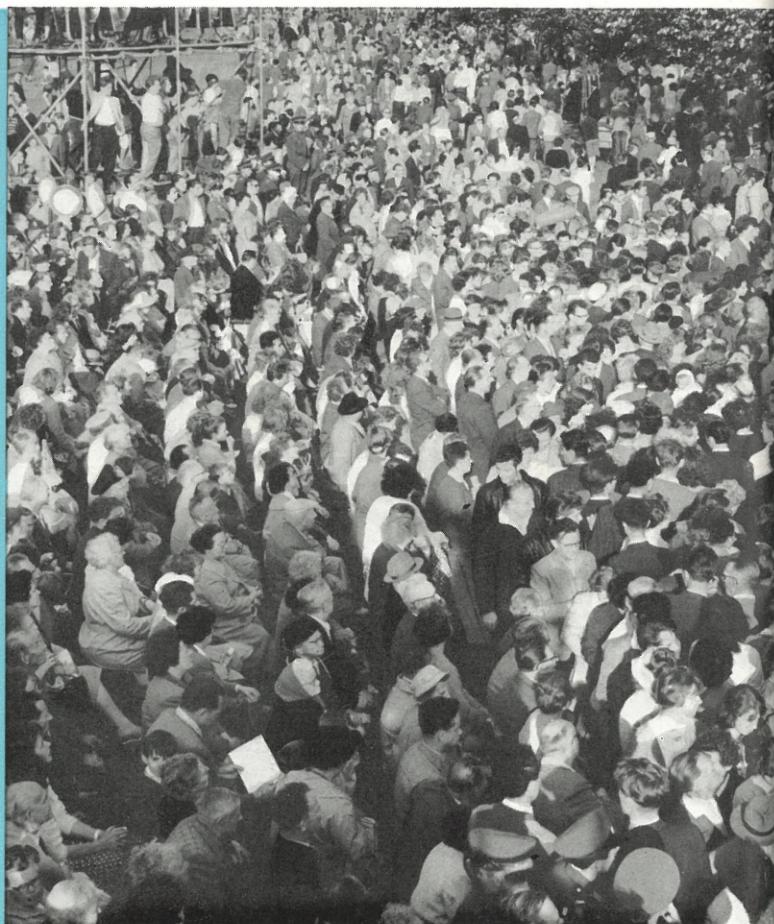
Alfred Kurella, member of the cultural commission of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, Dr. Arnold Zweig, Anna Seghers and the grand old man of German acting, Eduard von Winterstein, were among the outstanding personalities from cultural and political life who were present at the ceremony. Paul Robeson expressed his thanks and continued: *"From the time I was born I had great pride in my African heritage. So whatever the American imperialists said to me as a child, however they tried to make me believe that I had no culture, I knew and grew to learn even more, that I had a great culture that stretches back centuries to my native Africa."*

He went on to say that his art has its roots in the people just like that of the great German composers like Schubert and Mozart, who also drew their inspiration from the people. Paul Robeson then gave a recital of songs which certainly proved his point. He sang a Negro song, a Chinese children's song and the rousing, militant song of the insurgents of the Warsaw ghetto. Wolfgang Langhoff, a former inmate of the Buchenwald concentration camp, and today director of the famous Deutsches Theater in Berlin, is an old friend of Paul Robeson, and therefore he sang "Song of the Peat-Bog Soldiers". The beautiful voice of Paul Robeson filled the hall and the audience was deeply moved.



*Crowds  
of onlookers  
besiege Robeson's  
car*

**O**ne of the nicest birthday presents and certainly the most popular for the people of Berlin on the 11th anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic was a song recital given by Paul Robeson in the huge Marx - Engels Square, traditional meeting place of the Berlin workers. Well before Robeson was due to appear, close to a hundred thousand people flocked to the square.



*The President of the Peoples Chamber of the G. D. R., Dr. Johannes Dieckmann, welcomes Paul Robeson as the guest of honour, at the reception for the 11th Anniversary of the founding of the Republic. To the right: the President of the National Council, Professor Erich Correns*



Despite the very many commitments, a press conference was arranged to give the many journalists an opportunity to interview Paul Robeson. Mrs. Greta Kuckhoff, Vice-President of the German Peace Council, chaired the conference.

Dr. George Krauss, chairman of the Association of German Journalists, expressed the opinion of all the representatives of the press, radio and television of the G. D. R., when he said: "For us journalists you are an

*example of a great world-wide propagandist for your ideas and ideals, which are also ours, the ideas for which we journalists in the G. D. R. fight with our heads, our hearts and our hands."*

Paul Robeson answered: "I am very, very happy to be here with the press of the socialist lands. I will be able to tell my people about what I have seen here in your republic. What warmth I have received in the name of my people. You want to see my people in America, in Africa, everywhere, able to work in full dignity. Your government and leaders speak of full disarmament and peace in the world and I am sure that we shall speak of these things today. I will treasure this programme from last night - 'Paul Robeson sings for the young people of Germany'. This I have longed to do. They sang for me, and very beautifully too. It is one of the experiences I shall remember. The young people may know that not only myself but many of us, white and black and all colours in America are going to stand by them as they struggle for peace."

Answering a question from one correspondent as to who were the true representatives of America, Robeson said:

"I would say, the America of Lincoln, which freed the Negro people, the struggles for independence in the Civil War, Frederick Douglass, one of the great Negro leaders, and Harriet Tubman, who built the underground railroad by which people escaped from slavery. I would also say, Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Roosevelt who said that we must recognise the necessity of the struggle

against fascism, and the Roosevelt who said that on the banks of the Volga in Stalingrad (where I stood in 1958) civilisation was saved. The Roosevelt who realised that the world had changed, and that we, the American people and the people of the socialist lands would be living in friendship and in healthy competition.

The very basic thing to consider is what the forces are that want peace; who the people are that say: Get your bases out of here, you folks from the Pentagon or who say: Let's sit down with Khrushchov, we know that he is honest when he says: 'We want disarmament in the world.'

A very important phase is taking place in Great Britain today. There are also millions of people in America who are saying: Let's end nuclear rearmament. Indicative of this feeling is for instance the very important movement led by Dr. Linus Pauling."

Another newspaperman asked: "What do you think of Mr. Khrushchov's proposal at the 15th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to give all colonial and dependent countries their freedom and independence?"

Paul Robeson answered: "This is certainly one of the most important pronouncements that could be made in our time. Clearly if these nations were independent the danger





*Meeting Helene Weigel-Brecht,  
Director of the Berlin Ensemble*

*of war would be lessened greatly. But from the point of view of people like my own in Asia, in Africa and in Latin America, who have been a subject people, stepped upon and persecuted literally for centuries, we are certainly deeply thankful to Mr. Khrushchov. The most important thing to do, it seems to me, is to act upon this suggestion. Of course, the colonial peoples know that it is not likely to be done, but that is all the more reason to really struggle and see that the colonial people win their freedom as soon as possible.*

*It is quite clear from the position of the Soviet Union as to Cuba and to Africa that there can be no question how the power of the Soviet peoples and the lands of socialism*

*is used, namely, for those struggling for peace and national independence. It is for that reason, may I add, that I am here in the German Democratic Republic, that I have visited the Soviet Union many times and will continue to spend at least half my life, that is left to me, in the socialist lands. May I repeat once more, especially from this vantage point in East Berlin, that I am, as an American, devoted to my land, to the decent traditions of America, and that I am a friend, was a friend, and always will be a friend of the Soviet people and the peoples of the democracies of socialism."*

To the question: "Have you found any traces of racial discrimination in the G. D. R. or in other socialist countries?" Robeson answered:

*"It has been my privilege to visit many lands of socialism. And everywhere I have never found any kind or form of race discrimination.*

*I also know that the very basis of your society could not lead under any circumstances to such phenomena. There may be some remains of race discrimination here and there but I certainly have not seen any. I myself feel very close to the problems of the Jewish people. As a matter of fact, I was in Dachau in 1945, at the end of the war. I came over to sing for the troops who had fought against fascism.*

There I saw the death chambers and the ashes of some of the victims. I remember the ashes of my people not only in Africa, but in the states of Mississippi, in Alabama, in Georgia, in the whole slave South. Hitler had a chance to learn something from them and these experiences in Germany and in the USA can never be separated in my mind.

It happens that my grand-children are part-Jewish, so that I am particularly concerned that the struggles of the Negro and the Jewish people become united.

I am very deeply grateful to you here in this part of Germany for your understanding of these problems. But we also know that there are also many brave fighters in West Germany, who fight against racial discrimination despite the greatest difficulties. I imagine it is pretty hard for you to understand that there are many people even in the deep south of my land who share similar aspirations. I wish to conclude my interview with the words of Brecht, with which he addressed the Peoples' Congress for Peace in 1952:

'The memories of mankind for its sufferings is amazingly short. Its idea of sufferings to come is even less. The description which the New Yorkers had of the horrors of the atomic bomb apparently hardly frightened them at all. The people of Hamburg, although still surrounded by ruins, hesitate to raise their hands against the danger of a new war. The world-wide horrors of the forties seem forgotten.

It is this apathy, its extreme form being death, which we must fight against. All too often we have people today who appear as if dead, like people who have already behind them what actually is before them, because they do so little against it. Yet nothing will convince me that it is hopeless to side with reason against its enemies. Let us repeat again and again what has already been said a thousand times, because it cannot be said once too often. Let us renew the warnings even if they taste like ashes in our mouth! Because mankind is threatened with wars compared to which past ones seem like miserable attempts; and they will come without the slightest doubt, if the hands of those, who openly prepare for them, are not smashed.'

Paul Robeson also accepted an invitation from the workers in the Electrical Engineering Works in Treptow, Berlin. He was especially pleased to be able to meet with the workers and their wives informally. During the lively discussion Paul Robeson said:

*"I feel at home with the Berlin workers. I understand the struggle of your people and I understand too that this struggle must be linked with the struggle of the whole working class for their freedom. My people in America have to learn to understand that the stronger the countries of socialism are, the more successful their struggle in Latin-*

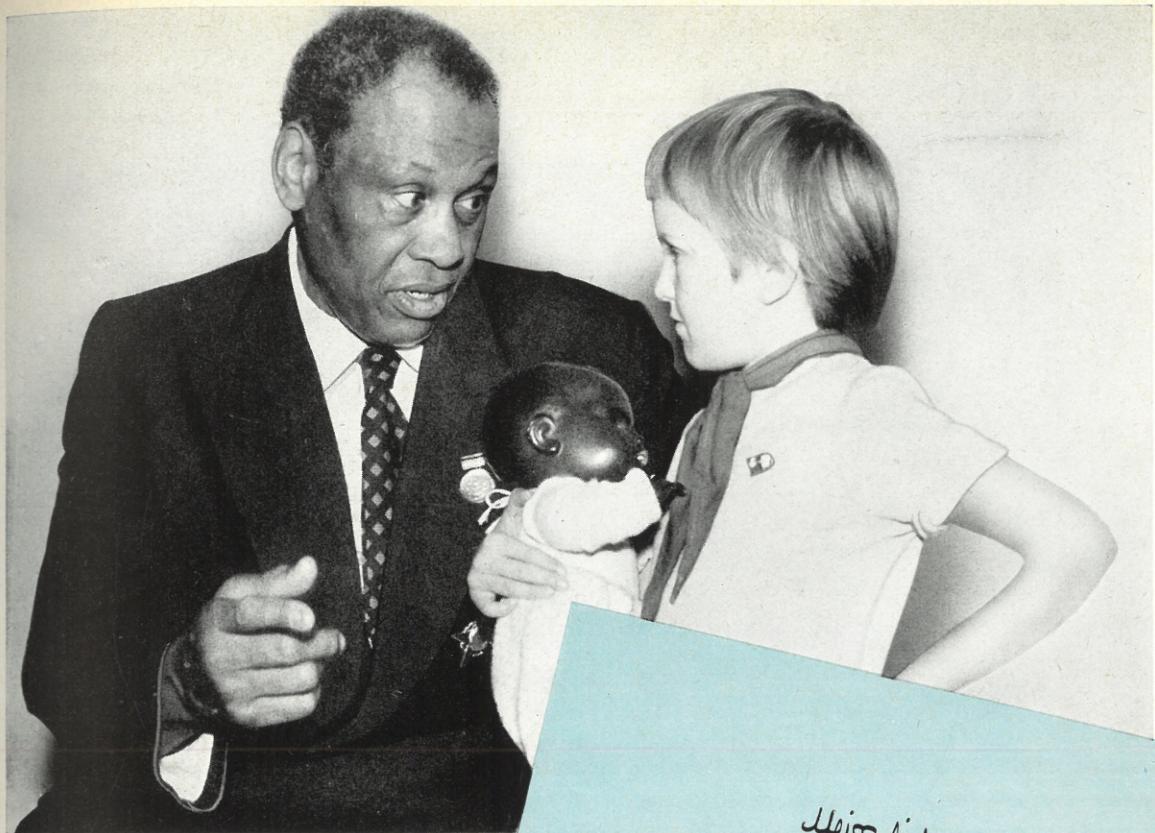
*America, in Africa and Asia will be. I shall tell the peoples in other parts of the world that I have seen the true Germany, the warm-hearted Germany, the humanistic Germany, those who are the true inheritors of Beethoven's ideal that 'All men shall be brothers'."*

When Paul Robeson opened his last concert in Berlin, thousands who heard his powerful, inspiring voice, in the workshops and outside the gates of the factory, felt bound by a wonderful feeling of solidarity which unites the people of our great peace movement.

Many German friends and admirers of Paul Robeson impatiently wait for his already planned visit to the German Democratic Republic.

*In the Club of the Electrical Engineering Works, Berlin-Treptow*





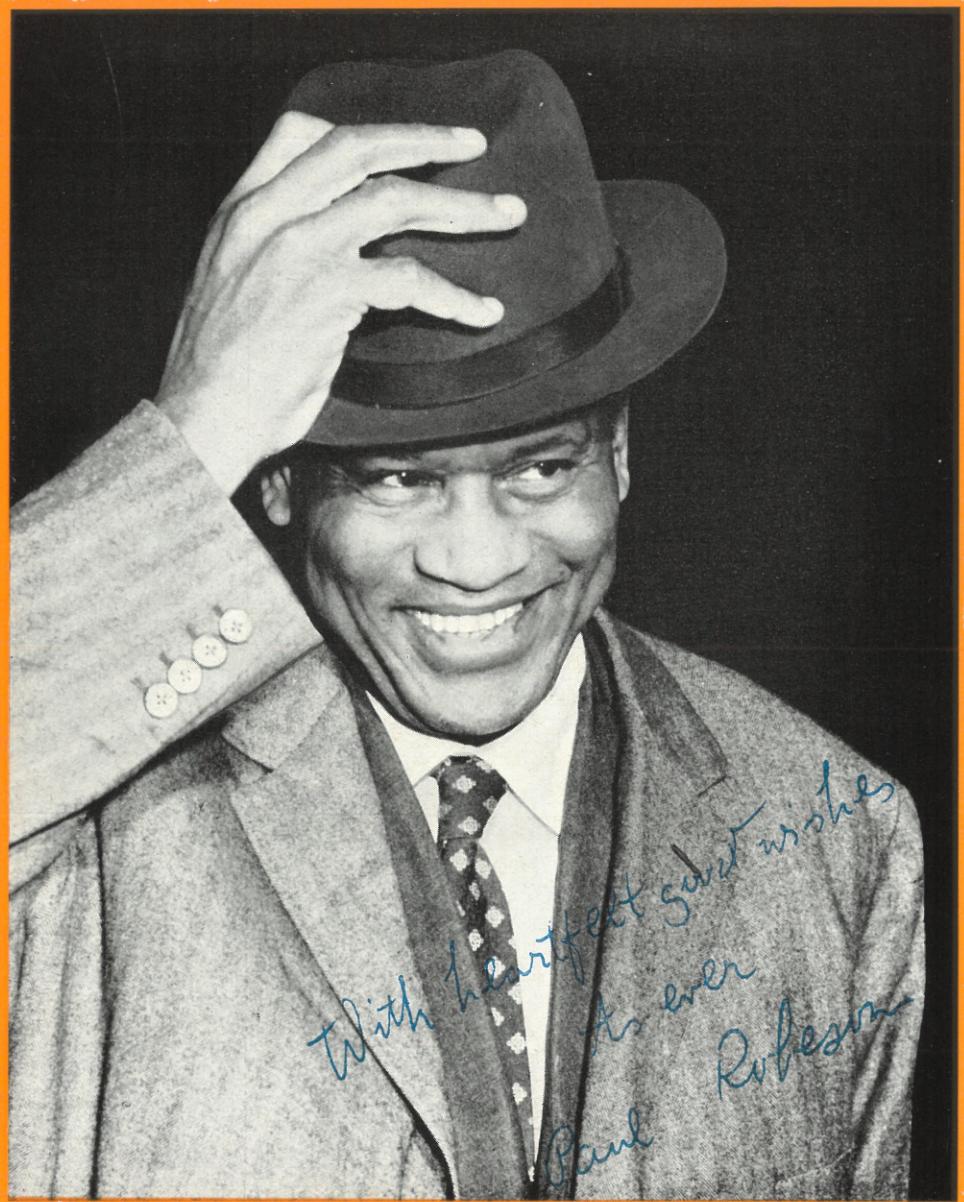
Intimate chat with the eight year old Anka Ursula Goll from Berlin

Mein lieber Paul Robeson!

Ich wollte Dir schon einmal nach Amerika schreiben. Aber keiner wußte Deine Straße. Ich bin 8 Jahre alt und meine liebste Puppe heißt Jimmi und ist ein Kleinkind. Bleibe lieber bei uns in der DDR. Wenn Du in Amerika bist, habe ich immer Angst um dich.

Berlin-Karlshorst  
Gundelfingerstr. 48

Deine Anka Goll



During his whole visit, wherever he went, the people of the German Democratic Republic gave Paul Robeson a warm welcome. To him, the people of the G. D. R. are representative of all that to which he has devoted his whole life and art – the cause of humanity and peace. As he, our beloved Paul Robeson said, "This is not 'Good-bye' but just 'Auf Wiedersehen'!"

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